



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

monopolies and great industrial properties of a possible future state of society to provide the means of discharge; nor, like Fourier, would he resort to so fantastic a device as payment through increasing the number of hens' eggs. While total payment, which was the ideal of the classical school, is out of the question, consideration for posterity, preparedness for time of danger, and the interest of a sound public credit demand a policy of compulsory redemption.

As this work does not pretend to be a complete treatise upon public credit, the author does not develop in detail his ideas in regard to debt creation and redemption. The result is that the work is mainly a description of the theories of leaders of the classical school, and its chief interest should be for those German readers, who, according to the author, are guilty of regarding Adam Smith as a scientific dilettante and classical political economy as unscientific. With the theories of this school and with what is of present practical value in them, English and American students of public finance are already familiar. Of these Dr. Berckum's book is a useful assemblage and interpretation.

E. T. MILLER.

University of Texas.

Die Technik des Finanzhaushalts der deutschen Städte im Mittelalter. By L. SCHÖNBERG. (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger. 1910. Pp. xvi, 199. 4.20 m.).

In this little volume Dr. Schönberg has made an excellent contribution to the rapidly increasing literature on economic history. The title would indicate that it might contain considerable of interest on the theory of taxation. While this is true to a certain extent the main effort of the writer is devoted to an investigation of the system of accounting and the methods of handling cash in the mediaeval towns. The work will in fact appeal most to the student interested in accounting as a part of economic theory.

In the introduction the author shows why a study of the finances of the mediaeval towns is worth while. A good tax system, by keeping ready money on hand, enabled the town governments to grow strong and powerful. The overlord's pressing need for money put him at the mercy of the thrifty town officials,

who from this situation gradually worked out their freedom. These political and economic activities of the little town republics show them as microcosms of the modern state.

The growth of the town council or *Rath* is traced. First it is merely advisory to the overlord; finally it becomes supreme in the control of town affairs; then the development of a principal office, as *Schatzmeister*, *Rechenmeister*, *Beutelherr*, etc., who was master of the treasury; and also a horde of lesser officials who became a sort of professional bureaucracy. The salaries paid were low but the honor of the position was considerable.

The range of taxation was not great in mediaeval times, for according to the principle of *individuelle Nutzungsvergütung*, private interests must look after the things they use. Public responsibility for roads and bridges was not recognized. Also the *Bürgerpflicht*, or watch and ward, dispensed with some taxation needs. Many institutions as churches, hospitals and places of refuge, although within the field of government affairs, were kept up on the principle of endowment.

In the second part the bookkeeping system or method of accounting is discussed. There was no account keeping until the fourteenth century. Then the method was single entry, a list of the items of cash income and outgo. These were then grouped under certain accounts which generally were very confused and faulty. The length of the fiscal year was very irregular and the summing up for reports very crude. An interesting chapter from the accountant's point of view is the description of the calculation with Roman notation, which was used up to the end of the fifteenth century. The reckoning was worked out on a table-top carved with lines and Roman numerals, and in later times upon a *Rechentuch*, a cloth marked in the same way. The use of the Arabic notation superseded this but slowly.

The idea of a budget scarcely existed until late in the middle ages. When the town was small there was no need for a budget since variations in needs were met by raising and lowering certain *Kopfsteuern* or head taxes. When there began a distinct forecasting of needs, or *Voranschlag*, then appeared the elements of a budget; and when there were certain outgoes awaiting funds from certain income sources there came the balancing of outgo and income which is the essential feature of a budget.

A much mooted question is whether there existed a *fiscalische Kasseneinheit* in the town system of the Middle Ages, i. e., a period of time as a fiscal year, wherein the cash receipts and cash expenditures were made to coincide. A careful review leads Dr. Schönberg to conclude that no such thing existed. Each separate specie fund had its scope fixed, its work to do; its income and outgo must agree. The bookkeeping of it was drawn into the common treasury account only through surpluses and deficits. To each new outgo was assigned a particular income source.

The complicated system of checks and balances of modern times with a regular auditing of accounts did not exist. The control was through administrative measures; usually three keys in the hands of three different persons were necessary in handling the money chests. There was also a periodical reckoning of the amounts by the council.

DONALD F. GRASS.

Stanford University.

Die Besteuerung nach dem Wertzuwachs. Insbesondere die direkte Wertzuwachssteuer. By H. WEISSENBORN. (Berlin: Verlagsbuchhandlung von Julius Springer. 1910. Pp. vi, 156. 3.60 m.)

This is an eminently practical treatise, sane, logical and penetrating, upon the taxation of value-increase, and especially upon the so-called unearned increment of value. In writing this book the author has kept two objects in view: first, to penetrate, more deeply and scientifically than has been done, into the characteristic problems of the taxation of value-increase; and second, to blaze a new trail for the further progress of old but sound ideas concerning such taxation.

Former literature upon this subject has been rendered comparatively fruitless, despite its thorough survey of the theoretical field, inasmuch as it has not furnished a practical program for states or municipalities about to introduce a new scheme of taxation upon the unearned increment. For the most part this arises because in short treatises, as well as in larger works, there is manifest confusion in the minds of the authors regarding fundamental principles; due, no doubt, to a defective knowledge of economic science. This is seen particularly in their classification of